

Board, Advisory Council discuss higher education finance study at January meeting

With legislation looming that might permit raising tuition as much as 14 percent annually and declining levels of state appropriations, the Higher Education Coordinating Board met with its Advisory Council Jan. 29, 2010.

The Board and its Advisory Council agreed that a comprehensive finance study, called for in the recently completed System Design Plan is needed to spur significant reinvestment by the state in its public higher education institutions.

Board and Advisory Council members also recommended that a statewide campaign be conducted to strengthen public understanding of the value of higher education as a public good.

The HECB will conduct further analysis of the economic and societal benefits of higher education as a way to begin the financing study. An effort will be made to establish a more direct link between how levels of state funding produce specific economic and societal benefits.

HECB financial aid report shows recession spurring increased demand, need for aid

Financial aid from all sources for Washington students increased in 2008-09, with federally subsidized loans accounting for nearly half of the \$1.8 billion total. The annual HECB report, *Keeping College Affordable*, provides an in-depth look at financial aid in the state.

The recession caused many more students from lower-income families to seek higher education last fiscal year. This and rising tuition levels increased the need for financial aid substantially.

Of the \$272.6 million appropriated for state financial aid in 2010-2011, nearly 85 percent will support the State Need Grant program, which provides grants for the state's neediest students. [Read more.](#)

State Actuary Office presents report on future GET fund stability to Board

A report by the State Actuary Office authorized by the Legislature in 2009, found that the Guaranteed Education Tuition program is on a sound financial footing if current management practices are continued.

According to the report, the likelihood that the state would need to provide direct support for the fund is only 1.5 percent in a 'status quo' scenario. This assumes GET unit pricing continues to rise in tandem with tuition increases and there are no significant market downturns. GET is wholly financed by the purchases of its subscribers. GET units are guaranteed by the state to cover the future cost of tuition.

However, the report noted, if tuition increases an average of 10 percent annually over a 15-year period, or if there is another serious market downturn, GET unit prices may have to rise to levels that are unaffordable for most purchasers. In this case, a new model for GET pricing might be needed. [Read more.](#)

WASHINGTON HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

System Design Plan legislation advancing

Proposed legislation to implement the recommendations of a new System Design Plan was introduced in both the House and Senate and is advancing toward a vote.

The legislation would remove the pilot designation for applied baccalaureate degree programs at the CTCs, provide a new process for mission expansion, and revise the Fund for Innovation statute to direct future funding toward programs designed to implement the goals of the Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education.

- [SSB 6355](#)
- [SHB 2655](#)

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Board approves two new degree programs

A new University of Washington **Master of Science in Information Science (MSIS)** will be offered as a option for students in the UW's Information Science doctoral program.

A **Bachelor of Arts in Education Language, Literacy, and Cultural Studies** housed in the Western Washington University Woodring College of Education, will be offered in spring 2010.